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Coordination between United Nations agencies involved in peace-building

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the comments of the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Coordination at Headquarters and field level between United Nations agencies involved in peace-building: an assessment of possibilities" (JIU/REP/97/4).

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Annex

Comments of the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Coordination at Headquarters and field level between United Nations agencies involved in peace-building: an assessment of possibilities"

I. General

1. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination attach great importance to the topic of the report, which deals with complex issues relating to coordination among organizations of the United Nations system involved in post-conflict peace-building. However, the September 1997 report appears to have overlooked the important decisions and conclusions reached by the Committee in April 1997 (which were followed up at the session of the Committee in April 1998) on the coordination of the system's capabilities in the field of peace-building, on the basis of extensive preparatory work undertaken by the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee over the previous year.

2. The report briefly notes the designation by the Secretary-General of the Department of Political Affairs as the focal point of the United Nations system for all post-conflict peace-building activities. It does not, however, cover follow-up actions taken in developing a system-wide "strategic framework" for response to and recovery from crises. Directly relevant to the enhancement of coordination within the United Nations system are also the Secretary-General's reform measures, which include the establishment, within the United Nations, of four executive committees and the Senior Management Group, and which aim to ensure information exchange and coordination of policy at the executive level of departments and programmes accountable to the Secretary-General. By bringing about policy and operational coherence among Headquarters entities and between them and the field in all areas, including peace-building, the new structure should greatly facilitate overall system-wide coordination.

3. The report's analysis also appears to have given insufficient recognition to the evolution in the United Nations system's thinking over the past several years, away from linear and self-contained phases of operation (such as peacemaking, peacekeeping, post-conflict peace-building) towards more holistic and mutually reinforcing responses to crisis situations. The report gives insufficient attention, furthermore, to an essential player in coordination: the country itself. While this is explicitly acknowledged by the inspectors, the result is a partial view of the role of the United Nations system in post-conflict peace-building, particularly in situations where specialized agencies are called upon to provide assistance to countries affected by complex emergencies or a breakdown in governance.

4. Overall, the inspectors' conclusions do not take sufficiently into account the ongoing efforts to strengthen coordination mechanisms within the United Nations system. The statement in the report that "in practice there are no effective coordination mechanisms for post-conflict peace-building at the policy, Headquarters and system-wide levels" is not substantiated and does not take into consideration the important country-specific coordination mechanisms that have been established and are being strengthened within the framework of the Department of Political Affairs, the executive committees, the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. In

addition, the inspectors' description of the United Nations as "a fragmented configuration of competing organizations" is not supported by empirical evidence drawn from the current work of the Administrative Committee on Coordination or the Standing Committee, or the recent experience of the Department of Political Affairs as the designated focal point for post-conflict peace-building. In spite of the inspectors' welcome recognition of the inherently political nature of post-conflict peace-building, the report appears to be somewhat outdated conceptually in relation to the way in which the subject is currently understood by the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, and does not reflect the considerable progress that has been made in recent years, both conceptually and in terms of practical experience, in understanding and acting on the concept of peace-building.

5. Since the publication of "An Agenda for Peace" (June 1992), the concept of peace-building has generated much discussion at the United Nations, both in intergovernmental bodies and in the Secretariat. It is now generally accepted that conflict can neither be prevented nor resolved unless effective action is taken to address the underlying factors which could lead, or have led, to hostilities. Sometimes these factors are purely political or military and can be corrected by political and military measures (for example, the negotiated settlement of a frontier dispute, accompanied by separation of forces). In most cases, however, especially in internal conflicts, the causes may relate to ethnic, economic and social factors and policies which exclude whole sectors of society from the country's political or economic life. These causes of conflict are usually more difficult and take longer to address than politico-military ones. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination recognize that, in such cases, the challenge before the United Nations system is to undertake an integrated and coordinated programme of action containing political, military, humanitarian, human rights, economic and social elements to ensure that conflict is prevented or resolved on a lasting basis. Its implementation requires close interaction with the Government(s) concerned and other parties involved, as well as various non-governmental actors.

6. At its April 1997 session, the Administrative Committee on Coordination addressed approaches to peace-building in country situations in which, in addition to ongoing humanitarian and development activities, the United Nations operates political programmes, normally mandated by the General Assembly or the Security Council, that have as their primary purpose the prevention, control and/or resolution of a conflict. The Committee recognized that, in most such situations, the achievement of political objectives and the consolidation of peace need to be supported by an integrated effort by the whole of the United Nations system to address the various factors which have caused or are threatening to provoke a conflict. Peace-building, so conceived, does not replace ongoing humanitarian and development activities in countries which are threatened by or are emerging from crisis. On the contrary, it aims to build on them and to introduce further activities or reorientation of existing activities, which – in addition to their intrinsic humanitarian or developmental value – are politically relevant because they reduce the risk of conflict or contribute to creating conditions most conducive to reconciliation, reconstruction and recovery. Members of the Committee consider it important that, in such situations, the respective roles of the various actors within the United Nations system, both at Headquarters and in the field, should be clearly defined.

II. Comments on recommendations

Recommendation 1:

The coordination framework for post-conflict peace-building must be, *inter alia*, overarching and coherent, yet sufficiently flexible to adjust to the unique aspects of each peace-building situation. The preferred method of coordination will therefore be "ad hoc" based on certain generally agreed-upon principles.

7. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination wish to point out that much progress has been made in recent years in improving coordination within the United Nations itself, including the Secretariat and the concerned programmes and funds of the United Nations, and between the United Nations and the specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions. Such coordination, notably with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, is now established procedure when it comes to planning and supporting rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in post-conflict situations. Inter-agency coordination is sought not only for reconstruction and economic rehabilitation but also in relation to the security and political aspects of peace-building, such as demobilization, disarmament, the professionalization of police and security forces, institutional reform, enhancing governance and public administration, human rights monitoring, electoral reform, land transfers, etc. The Committee is playing a crucial leadership role in this regard.

8. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination believe that the basic issue is how to draw maximum advantage from the range of capabilities available in the system, both its capabilities for political or humanitarian intervention, and its capacity to address the basic factors that are at the root of conflicts. The aim is to integrate the system's analytical capabilities, its capacity for political mediation and humanitarian response, and its experience in development cooperation into a coherent force to build and sustain peace.

9. At its April 1997 session, the Administrative Committee on Coordination agreed that peace-building, as a broad-based approach to crisis prevention and resolution, should comprise integrated and coordinated actions aimed at addressing any combination of political, military, humanitarian, human rights, environmental, economic, social, cultural and demographic factors. The system's objective in this regard is to ensure that conflict is prevented or resolved on a lasting basis, and that the process of long-term and sustainable development is in place and is not interrupted; where it has been interrupted, it should be resumed as expeditiously as possible.

10. The Administrative Committee on Coordination recognized that political, humanitarian, economic and social factors could not, in most situations, be effectively dealt with independently of one another and are best addressed in a holistic and mutually reinforcing manner. Members of the Committee are committed to mobilizing timely and well-coordinated system-wide responses to potential and actual crisis situations, tailored to the requirements of each particular case. They fully share the inspector's view that the coordination framework must be overarching and coherent, but it must also take into account the unique aspects of each post-conflict situation and, thus, be flexible and adaptable to different circumstances. This does not necessarily mean, however, that ad hoc coordination, as advocated by the inspectors, is sufficient; an effective division of labour in the system requires a degree of predictability in response procedures and coordination mechanisms.

Recommendation 2:

All actors working together on one strategic plan for recovery, a framework for coordination must be established during the initial reconstruction planning phases. Member States, as represented in the components of the United Nations system, may consider the agreement ending the conflict as a suitable platform for outlining and reinforcing a series of measures and actions to consolidate peace, establish linkage between peacekeeping and peace-building operations, and outline the framework for coordination.

11. This recommendation is already being implemented through the "strategic framework" approach, and the development, within that approach, of country-specific "strategies" aimed at an integrated, coherent and unified approach to planning the response to emergencies and facilitating recovery from crises.

12. The starting point of the strategic framework process is a recognition of the shortcomings of the "relief to development continuum" notion as a basis for inter-agency coordination, and for ensuring the impact and sustainability of international support activities. The strategic framework process is based on a comprehensive, holistic approach and is intended to introduce a common conceptual tool for identifying, analysing and prioritizing the key issues and problems to be addressed in a given situation and adopting strategies to meet needs on the basis of shared principles and objectives, with clearly defined and complementary roles for different agencies. The process is receiving strong support from both agencies and donors. It still requires substantial refinement and practical application.

13. By facilitating common assessments of requirements and laying out a common strategy for reconstruction based on shared objectives and principles, the strategic framework process aims to address the problem of the disjuncture between relief and development and between the political and assistance strategies. It should also enable multilateral actors to incorporate the goal of reconciliation into their reconstruction activities in a more comprehensive way. Finally, it should lead to greater complementarity between the roles and activities of different agencies. The adoption of a common strategy and of common objectives and principles by all concerned actors should serve to ensure that, from the early stages of planning, activities are informed by common priorities.

14. The strategic framework approach is intended to be applied to the relatively small number of countries where the United Nations is called upon to take a leadership role in conflict-resolution and peace-building efforts. In those countries, the strategic framework defines the principles and the normative and consultative arrangements on the basis of which international assistance activities and the political strategy can contribute towards reconciliation and recovery in a mutually reinforcing manner. Elements of the strategic framework approach may well be applicable in other countries at various stages of recovery from a crisis.

15. In agreeing, at its first regular session in 1997, on the basic elements of a strategic framework for response to and recovery from a crisis, the Committee concluded that, for the strategic framework to be effective, it must engage all partners in the United Nations system as well as national authorities and other humanitarian and development actors in the country concerned. In this connection, the Committee stressed the importance of partnerships: on the one hand, the international community's response to crisis situations should increasingly encompass the participation of bilateral and multilateral donors and international and non-governmental organizations and, on the other, it must promote more

participatory approaches to ensure that the affected populations are in control of the reconciliation and recovery processes.

16. Further to the Committee's decision, the strategic framework approach is currently being tested in Afghanistan. The exercise has drawn on broad-based participation of a wide range of international partners, and has involved, in addition to the concerned United Nations departments, funds and programmes, interested specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions, Member States, and national and international non-governmental organizations including the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, at both the field and Headquarters levels. The outcome of this collaborative work has been subjected to varying levels of review and consideration by several mechanisms that have included the Committee's subsidiary machinery, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Secretary-General's executive committees.

17. The draft strategic framework for Afghanistan encompasses two distinct but mutually reinforcing processes: a political strategy for peace-building and a common programming mechanism for international assistance. Complementarity between these two strategies is the condition for improved performance of the United Nations system and the international community at large in the context of the Afghan crisis. A new set of collaborative arrangements is currently being developed both at Headquarters and in the field.

18. At the Headquarters level, in order to maximize the coherence of United Nations peace-building efforts in response to the crisis in Afghanistan, the Deputy Secretary-General is chairing a task force on Afghanistan. It comprises concerned United Nations political and operational partners, including the World Bank. At the field level, in order to enhance field-level inter-agency control of the strategic framework and of the resultant assistance activities, the Coordinator for United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan chairs an Afghanistan programming board consisting of representatives of United Nations assistance agencies, the Special Envoy's Office, coordinating bodies of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individual NGOs, the World Bank, the International Committee of the Red Cross and international assistance donors. The board provides for a clear division of labour and improved coordination and operational arrangements. For the purposes of ensuring transparency and accountability, a strategic monitoring capacity will be established, either as an independent unit or as a joint mechanism accountable to the board. Its purpose will be to produce an authoritative and realistic assessment of the impact of international assistance and of the progress towards peace-building in Afghanistan.

19. In the spring of 1998, efforts aimed at setting the stage for a more coherent and principle-based approach to international assistance for Afghanistan reached an important benchmark with the issuance, after extensive consultations of all stakeholders in the field, of a document entitled "Making a reality of principled common programming". This document addresses the key problems and constraints in providing coordinated assistance to Afghanistan and the regional and national institutional mechanisms which could be immediately introduced to this effect. The document builds on the foundations laid by the strategic framework and on existing coordination and resource mobilization instruments, such as the consolidated appeals process. The donor-convened Afghanistan support group meeting held in London in May 1998 has fully supported this approach.

20. The process of formulating the draft strategic framework for Afghanistan has provided a conceptual basis for further consideration of future collaborative work by national and international partners. Overall, the majority of international partners working in Afghanistan have concluded that a more coherent, comprehensive and participatory approach is both

desirable and achievable. They believe that this work will assist in accomplishing the goal of more effective action in conditions of crisis.

21. The most important conclusion of the strategic framework process so far has been the recognition that the United Nations system and its partners must embark on a vigorous programme to enhance the coherence of the support provided by the system. The strategic framework process is predicated on the premise that effective peace-building requires new approaches and new and more systematic ways of working together within the system. In the coming months, efforts will continue both at Headquarters and in the field to refine the approach and to ensure appropriate consultations and ownership among international and national partners. At its April 1998 session, the Administrative Committee on Coordination reviewed the progress achieved in the testing of the "strategic framework" approach and welcomed the Secretary-General's decision that the Deputy Secretary-General would steer further development of the initiative.

Recommendation 3:

The Administrative Committee on Coordination should prepare a declaration on the coordination of peace-building activities for acceptance by the General Assembly and legislative bodies of specialized agencies which should recognize the need for United Nations system organizations to maintain their independence, yet articulate the primacy of the United Nations leadership and reinforce the need for coordination to ensure the maximum utilization of resources and the achievement of objectives. Such a declaration should also:

(a) Come to an agreement on a generally acceptable understanding of coordination;

(b) Establish clear mandates and guidelines for United Nations system organizations involvement in post-conflict peace-building activities;

(c) Identify organizations, both at the Headquarters and field levels, which will assume leadership for coordinating policy issues in post-conflict peace-building activities;

(d) Establish more formal and consistent coordination between United Nations system organizations and Bretton Woods institutions;

(e) Strengthen existing coordinating bodies, such as the Administrative Committee on Coordination, its subsidiary bodies and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee;

(f) Build and expand on coordination efforts under way along thematic lines.

22. As noted above, a course of action for promoting more effective and integrated peace-building activities was defined by the Administrative Committee on Coordination at its first regular session of 1997, and a number of specific follow-up steps are now being taken on the basis of the strategic framework approach. The exercise addresses a number of the proposals made in the above recommendation including, *inter alia*, giving recognition to the specific mandates of the organizations of the United Nations system, identifying those organizations responsible for policy-, field- and Headquarters-level leadership, and continuing to promote coordination between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. In the circumstances, it would appear advisable to await the outcome of the strategic framework exercise and an assessment of the experience gained in strengthening mechanisms for inter-secretariat coordination, before addressing the suitability of the inspectors' proposal that the Committee articulate generally accepted understandings of

coordination for peace-building for endorsement by the General Assembly and the various legislative bodies of United Nations specialized agencies. Meanwhile, the concerned intergovernmental bodies are being kept fully apprised of progress being achieved through the annual Committee reports.

Recommendation 4:

As one element of enhancing coordination, Member States may wish to consider the possibility of carrying out peace-building activities as a separate and distinct operation – "a peace-building operation" – albeit closely linked as a follow-on to the peacekeeping phase.

23. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination believe that a smooth and early transition to post-conflict peace-building is critical. Even prior to the end of the conflict, there is a need for a clear assessment of key post-conflict peace-building needs and of ways to meet them. Where a peacekeeping operation is deployed, planning for post-conflict needs should start ideally with the beginning of the peacekeeping operation itself. Peace-building elements should be explicitly and clearly identified and integrated into the mandates of the peacekeeping operation. When a peacekeeping operation comes to an end, the concluding mandate should include specific recommendations for the transitional period to the post-conflict phase. In this context, it must be recognized that, in practice, it is likely that there will be an overlap between the later phases of peacekeeping and the earlier phases of peace-building operations, and it may not always be feasible to maintain a separation between the two activities, as recommended by the inspectors. As can be seen in multidisciplinary operations which engage in both peacekeeping and peace-building from the beginning of their deployment, these activities are complementary and can be mutually reinforcing when undertaken simultaneously. Peace-building is, of course, a concept of wider applicability than peacekeeping, which is restricted to countries where "blue-helmets" or other peacekeeping forces are deployed.

24. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination share the conviction that the multidimensional nature of post-conflict peace-building demands effective coordination in the field. To this end, the Secretary-General has recently strengthened the authority of special representatives in the field. In Liberia, for example, where circumstances continue to require extraordinary support from the international community, the first United Nations Peace-building Support Office has been established. The Office is intended to strengthen and harmonize United Nations post-conflict peace-building efforts, while also helping to mobilize international political support for the country's reconstruction and recovery, and assisting Liberians in their efforts to promote reconciliation and respect for human rights. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General will be responsible for ensuring a consistent policy approach by the entire United Nations system. The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Liberia will be the Deputy to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and will continue to be responsible for the operational coordination of development activities carried out by the United Nations system. The Resident Coordinator will keep the Special Representative of the Secretary-General fully informed about relevant activities or initiatives of the United Nations and will provide continuity once the mandate of the Office has ended. As indicated in the recent report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318), it is hoped that similar coordination support structures will be established in other cases.

Recommendation 5:

Policy level

As peace-building is essentially a component of development activities, the coordination role of the Economic and Social Council in development policies and activities should be enhanced in accordance with Chapter X of the Charter of the United Nations.

Headquarters level

(a) Coordination issues related specifically to peace-building activities should be a regular agenda item to be discussed during the Secretary-General's "cabinet" meetings between United Nations departments;

(b) The secretariats of other United Nations system organizations should also follow the example set by the Secretary-General and establish a lead department for the coordination of policy and strategic decisions among system organizations involved in peace-building.

United Nations system level

(a) To more effectively coordinate United Nations system organizations involved in peace-building, the role of the Administrative Committee on Coordination should be expanded to include an ongoing coordinator role for post-conflict peace-building activities of the United Nations system. This should be accomplished within existing coordination mechanisms;

(b) The Inter-Agency Standing Committee should be strengthened in order for it to play a greater role in the coordination and integration of post-conflict peace-building activities among United Nations system organizations.

25. In the context of this recommendation, the inspectors have highlighted a key conceptual problem pertaining to post-conflict peace-building. Although they state here that "peace-building is essentially a component of development activities", in paragraph 19 of their report they also note "the inherently political nature of peace-building". In the opinion of the members of the Committee, both observations are valid. As a means of dealing with this, current efforts towards defining a strategic framework emphasize the need for the development, humanitarian and related perspectives to "inform and be informed by" the political process.

26. The relationship between peace-building and the United Nations system's ongoing humanitarian and developmental programmes needs to be clarified and is currently being addressed by the strategic framework exercise. Peace-building does not replace such programmes in countries which are threatened by, or emerging from, conflict. On the contrary, it complements them by introducing programmes which, in addition to their intrinsic humanitarian or developmental value, have a political value because they reduce the risk of conflict. As noted already, the respective roles, in such situations, of various actors within the United Nations system, both at Headquarters and in the field, is also being addressed by the current strategic framework exercise.

27. The fundamental importance of the political dimension of post-conflict peace-building arises from the fact that, within the United Nations system, the source of political guidance and leadership is the Secretary-General. It is the Secretary-General who has been entrusted with the political mandate by the Security Council or the General Assembly and who is responsible for performing the principal political functions (such as good offices, mediation,

negotiation, peacekeeping, verification). Except in the case of an enforcement operation, the Secretary-General carries out these functions with the general consent of the parties to the potential or actual conflict. The obligation to be impartial between the parties also precludes the close partnership with the Government which is characteristically and necessarily sought in the developmental and humanitarian contexts. This severely limits the extent to which the Secretary-General can delegate the political functions to organs of the United Nations system which are running developmental or humanitarian operations in the country concerned.

28. In each such situation accepted arrangements are therefore necessary at the headquarters level and in the field to enable the Secretary-General to exercise the necessary political leadership and ensure that the United Nations programmes, funds, offices and agencies which are active in the country or countries concerned work in concert to achieve the same goal, within the framework of their existing mandates, lines of authority and funding arrangements. It is for this reason that the Secretary-General has designated the Department of Political Affairs as the focal point for post-conflict peace-building within the United Nations system.

29. Under action 5 in the Secretary-General's report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), it is stated that

> "With immediate effect, the Department of Political Affairs, in its capacity as current convener of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, will be the focal point within the United Nations for post-conflict peace-building. The Executive Committee on Peace and Security, in collaboration with other executive committees as appropriate, will be responsible for the design and implementation of post-conflict peace-building initiatives, including the definition of objectives, criteria and operational guidelines for post-conflict peace-building by the organizations of the United Nations system."

This decision by the Secretary-General therefore effectively addresses recommendations 5 (a) and (b) of the inspectors' report concerning improving coordination at the Headquarters level.

30. In the above-mentioned report on reform, the Secretary-General noted that the multidimensional nature of post-conflict peace-building "demands effective coordination measures" (para. 120). To this end, the Department of Political Affairs, as focal point and convener of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, will work particularly closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, bearing in mind in particular the importance of determining the point at which the emphasis on a peace-building role should give way to full-fledged reconstruction and development activities. Task forces on specific peace-building initiatives will also be established to ensure integrated action by the entire United Nations system, the chairmanship being decided on each occasion on a pragmatic basis. The focal point will support and reinforce the work of these task forces.

31. The Secretary-General's designation of a focal point for post-conflict peace-building is based on the recognition that political, humanitarian, economic and social factors cannot, in most situations, be effectively dealt with independently of one another and are best addressed in a mutually reinforcing manner and with adequate political guidance and support, having in mind the overarching goal of preventing the outbreak or recurrence of conflict. The objective is therefore to mobilize timely and well-coordinated system-wide

responses to crisis and post-crisis situations that are tailored to the particular requirements of each country, while at the same time fully respecting the existing mandates, lines of authority and funding arrangements of the United Nations organizations and agencies concerned. From this perspective, and guided by the expressed need for strengthened efforts in countries where the United Nations operates political programmes mandated by the Security Council or the General Assembly, the Department of Political Affairs, in performing its function as the focal point for peace-building, and in its capacity as convener and chair of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, will provide the mechanism within the United Nations for supporting the Secretary-General in:

(a) Reviewing humanitarian, economic, social and development imperatives and actions in order to ensure consistency with political and security strategies aimed at ending hostilities and establishing a favourable environment for reconciliation and recovery and determining, in coordination with the other members of the Executive Committee, at which point a particular situation requires the application of a concerted United Nations peace-building action;

(b) Assessing existing systems and methods for early warning, monitoring, data and information collection, retrieval and dissemination in order to provide a collaborative basis for setting standards, joint analysis and collective decision-making;

(c) Determining appropriate ad hoc multi-disciplinary efforts to achieve consistency of arrangements among international partners in ways that aim to reconcile short-term actions with longer-term goals that support the creation of just, productive, stable and sustainable societies;

(d) Monitoring the political effects of the agreed activities, and keeping under review, in consultation with the concerned programmes, funds and agencies, any adjustments which may be necessary.

32. It is the Secretary-General's responsibility, acting through the Department of Political Affairs, to keep the rest of the system informed of the Organization's peace operations, especially when it looks as though other United Nations bodies will have a contribution to make, within their mandates, to the achievement of the political objectives. In this context, the distinction between policy coordination and coordination of substantive activities should also be borne in mind.

33. This distinction is particularly relevant to the Inspectors' proposal that the role of the Administrative Committee on Coordination should be expanded to include an ongoing coordination role for post-conflict peace-building activities. The spirit of the proposal is fully consistent with the special attention that the Committee and its subsidiary machinery have recently been giving to these issues. It should, however, be viewed and defined within the framework of the current effort to streamline and further improve the functioning of the Committee's machinery. Neither the Committee nor its subsidiary machinery is structured, in periodicity or participation, for "managing coordination" in the field on a day-to-day basis. Much of the reform of the Committee was focused on reinforcing its role for developing executive policy frameworks and overall guidance for the system. It is at this level that the Committee's contribution to the coordination of post-conflict peace-building will continue to focus.

34. With regard to the role of the Economic and Social Council, it should be noted that consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system is scheduled to be on the agenda of the Council and of the General Assembly this year. As directed by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/120, this report will include a section on linkages

in the continuum between relief, rehabilitation and development. Also highly relevant in this regard is the decision to include a humanitarian segment in the work programme of the Council. At the substantive session of 1998, the focus of the work of the segment will be on coordination, and the outcome of the segment is expected to contribute to a definition of the Council's role in the peace-building effort.

35. With respect to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, it should be noted that its membership extends beyond the United Nations system, as it includes the Red Cross Movement, the International Organization for Migration and NGO representative bodies. Changes in its mandate would require a decision by the General Assembly. The Secretary-General and the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination are of the view that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's current mandate is adequate both for complex emergencies and for the coordination of the humanitarian aspects of post-conflict situations.

Recommendation 6:

Given the increasing role played by the Bretton Woods institutions in post-conflict peace-building activities, United Nations system organizations should formally establish coordination linkages, between themselves and these financial institutions to ensure both participation in the planning phases of post-conflict recovery and a sustainable, coordinated relationship throughout reconstruction. These linkages should be developed without the creation of new structures.

36. The inspectors appropriately devote a significant portion of their study to the role of the Bretton Woods institutions in post-conflict peace-building, although the approach to the establishment of "coordination" linkage in this recommendation appears to be somewhat at variance with that reflected in recommendation 1 where the inspectors favour an ad hoc approach. It is useful to recall here that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The efforts of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions working group on the subject of post-conflict recovery, in 1996–1997, included the active participation of the Bretton Woods institutions, as relevance and mutual benefit was perceived by all concerned. Similarly, the Secretary-General's advisory group on the strategic framework process in crisis countries, chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, as convener of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, includes the conveners of the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the World Bank. Currently, therefore, actual practice and the progress being made combine the approaches of recommendation 1 and recommendation 6.

37. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination believe that, where possible, effective agreements should be established between the organizations of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions so that the former may be taken into consideration from the outset in the planning and reconstruction phases financed by the latter. Furthermore, when agreements are established with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to coordinate development activities, the same mechanism/agreements could be expanded to include peace-building activities.

38. It should also be noted that, over the past few years, there has been a determined effort on the parts of both the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions to intensify cooperation on post-conflict cases at an early stage. A good example of this is Guatemala, where the above-mentioned recommendation was thoroughly acted upon. It should be added that, in describing the activities of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the report should have avoided combining the treatment of the two institutions under the

term "Bretton Woods institutions" since each plays a distinctive role in providing post-conflict assistance. There are many references to Bretton Woods institutions that do not apply to the Fund. While the two institutions do work closely with one another, it is important to make clear that the Fund's main area of responsibility and expertise is macroeconomic policy, and that, in cases where a Bretton Woods institution has taken the lead in a post-conflict peace-building effort, it has been the World Bank and generally not the Fund.

III. Conclusion

39. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination wish to express their appreciation to the inspectors for highlighting the importance of effective coordination among organizations of the United Nations system involved in post-conflict peace-building, and the need for clear and strong leadership in this regard. However, the usefulness of the report would have been greatly enhanced had the inspectors taken into fuller account the new orientations in policies and programmes as well as the structural and organizational changes being introduced within the system, and had the report been based on a more current definition of the issues under consideration, as they are now generally understood at the inter-agency level. This would have strengthened the contribution of the report to the current efforts being made by the Secretary-General and the Committee to improve coordination in the evolving field of post-conflict peace-building.

40. As indicated earlier, at its April 1997 session, the Administrative Committee on Coordination agreed that there should be accepted arrangements, at the Headquarters level as well as in the field, to enable the Secretary-General to provide guidance to the system as a whole, and to ensure that the United Nations programmes, funds and agencies that were active in the country or countries concerned worked in concert to achieve the same goal, within the framework of their existing mandates, lines of authority and funding arrangements. In this regard, the Committee concluded that the aim of such arrangements should be to:

(a) Ensure that the relevant programmes, funds and agencies are informed about the action the Secretary-General is taking to fulfil his political mandates and are invited to provide him with information and assessments relevant to his efforts;

(b) Inform them if, in the Secretary-General's judgement, their existing activities needed to be harmonized with the overall political strategy;

(c) Identify in each case, benefiting from the expert advice of the appropriate programmes, funds and agencies, specific peace-building activities that could strengthen the Secretary-General's political effort, and could be initiated by them in accordance with their existing mandates, lines of authority and funds and arrangements;

(d) Monitor the political effects of the agreed activities and keep under review, in consultation with the concerned programmes, funds and agencies, any adjustments that might be necessary.

41. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination note that in the course of the United Nations increased involvement in recent years in peace operations in the field, practices and procedures have developed that serve the peace-building objective. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination consider that the arrangements envisaged above, if properly understood and accepted, will provide a solid basis for building

and refining effective coordination practices, within the framework of the strategic framework exercise currently under way.